

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SAM-01 OPIC-03 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03

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FM AMEMBASSY LISBON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2663

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB, PO

SUBJ: MAY DAY ACTIVITIES

SUMMARY: OUTLOOK IS FOR A NON-VIOLENT, FESTIVE CELEBRATION EMPHASIZING TIES BETWEEN THE ARMED FORCES MOVEMENT (AFM) AND THE "PEOPLE." COMMUNIST PARTY WILL ATTEMPT TO UTILIZE ITS CONTROL OF ORGANIZED LABOR TO MOUNT LARGE-SCALE RALLY IN ORDER TO ERASE STIGMA OF ITS POOR ELECTION SHOWING. CONFRONTATIONS COULD OCCUR, HOWEVER, IF NEW LABOR LAW IS ISSUED WITH PRO-COMMUNIST FEATURES, AS SOME FEAR. END SUMMARY.

1. PORTUGUESE LABOR CONFEDERATION, INTERSINDICAL, IS SPONSORING MAY DAY OBSERVANCES IN LISBON, OPORTO, AND OTHER CITIES WITH COOPERATION OF GOVERNMENT. PRESIDENT COSTA GOMES, PRIME MINISTER VASCO GONCALVES, MEMBERS OF THE REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL, AND OTHERS IDENTIFIED WITH LABOR WILL ATTEND THE MAJOR OBSERVANCE SCHEDULED FOR A LISBON STADIUM DURING THE AFTERNOON. (PPD LEADERS HAVE BEEN EXCLUDED FROM RALLY BY INTERSINDICAL ON BASIS THAT PPD IS NOT REPRESENTATIVE OF WORKERS.) OTHER ACTIVITIES INCLUDE A PARADE WITH PARTICIPATION OF ARMED FORCES AND AN INTERNATIONAL SPORTS FESTIVAL.

2. HEAVY PREPONDERANCE OF DELEGATIONS FROM COMMUNIST COUNTRIES CHARACTERIZED INTERNATIONAL PARTICIPATION. REPRESENTATIVES ALSO

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PRESENT FROM ICFTU AND WORLD CONFEDERATION OF LABOR.

3. COMMUNIST PARTY IS TRYING TO MAKE MAY A MASSIVE POPULAR DEMONSTRATION, SIMILAR TO LAST YEAR'S MEMORABLE CELEBRATION OF THE OVERTHROW OF THE CAETANO DICTATORSHIP. OCCASION WILL BE USED, TO EXTENT POSSIBLE, TO RE-EMPHASIZE UNITY BETWEEN THE AFM AND THE PEOPLE.

4. EXTREME LEFT FRINGE GROUPS, INCLUDING MRPP, HAVE SCHEDULED COUNTERDEMONSTRATION IN DOWNTOWN LISBON DURING AFTERNOON TO PROTEST INTERSINDICAL'S LACK OF MILITANCY IN SUPPORTING WORKERS' DEMANDS FOR BETTER WAGES. BARRING NEW DEVELOPMENTS, VIOLENT CONFRONTATIONS ARE UNLIKELY, DUE TO GEOGRAPHIC SEPARATION OF TWO DEMONSTRATIONS.

5. EMBASSY HAS RECEIVED REPORTS THAT THE LONG-AWAITED UNITARY LABOR LAW (REGULATING ORGANIZATION OF LABOR MOVEMENT) MAY BE PROMULGATED MOMENTARILY, POSSIBLY WITH MODIFICATIONS TENDING TO INSTITUTIONALIZE PRESENT COMMUNIST CONTROL OF INTERSINDICAL. SUCH A MOVE WOULD BE DIRECT CHALLENGE TO SOCIALISTS, WHO NOW HOPE TO DO WELL IN INTERNAL UNION ELECTIONS CALLED FOR BY PRESENT TEXT OF PROPOSED LAW. IF SUBSTANTIALLY MODIFIED LABOR LAW SHOULD BE PUSHED THROUGH REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL, THERE IS POSSIBILITY OF VIOLENT CONFRONTATIONS BETWEEN SOCIALISTS AND COMMUNISTS, WITH ATTITUDE OF ON-SCENE MILITARY UNKNOWN. PPD LEADERS, REINFORCED BY THEIR SHOWING AT THE POLLS, ARE SMARTING AT THEIR EXCLUSION FROM THE OFFICIAL MAY DAY OBSERVANCES AND MAY TAKE A FIRM POSITION TO COUNTERACT THE PARTY'S IMAGE OF PASSIVITY.
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